

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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R 211743Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7056

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY LISBON

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 01968

LIMDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, SP, PO

SUBJECT: COMMENTS OF PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR IN FRANCE

REF: (A) PARIS 1753 (B) PARIS 1233 (C) PARIS 33086

(D) PARIS 01731

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. IN EXTENDED CONVERSATION WITH PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR ANTONIO COIMBRA MARTINS, EMBOFF (PROTECT THROUGHOUT) HAD OPPORTUNITY EXPLORE SOME FACETS CURRENT PORTUGUESE-FRENCH RELATIONS, AS WELL AS OTHER POINTS OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND CONCERN. END SUMMARY.

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2. PORTUGUESE-FRENCH RELATIONS: MARTINS CONFIRMED

OUR IMPRESSION THAT, AFTER PERIOD OF RESERVE, GOF IS INCREASINGLY LEANING TOWARD HELPING PORTUGUESE REGIME MORE ACTIVELY, BOTH POLITICALLY AND IN CERTAIN ECONOMIC WAYS. MOST IMPORTANT CLUE IS CURRENT FRENCH WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER ESCALATING SCHEDULE OF VISITS, IN WHICH BIJOU'S TRIP TO LISBON (REF B AND C) WAS FIRST STEP. ALTHOUGH DETAILS OF THIS PROGRAM ARE STILL UNDER DISCUSSION (AND AS ADDRESSEES WILL NOTE HAVE SO FAR NOT BEEN DISCLOSED TO US BY FRENCH), MARTINS NOW FORESEES FOLLOWING PROGRAM.

3. ON PORTUGUESE SIDE, FIRST VISIT WILL BE MADE BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN COMMERCE BETWEEN END OF JANUARY AND THE MIDDLE OF MARCH. THIS WILL BE FOLLOWED BY VISIT BY PORTUGUESE FINANCE MINISTER IN PERIOD MIDDLE FEBRUARY TO MIDDLE-MARCH. FRENCH FOR THEIR PART WILL FOLLOW UP WITH TRIP BY SAUVAGNARGUES TO LISBON, PROBABLY ON FEBRUARY 26 AND 27. FINALLY, BIJOU TRANSMITTED PORTUGUESE INVITATION TO GISCARD. TIMING AND GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS HIS VISIT TO PORTUGAL IN COMING MONTHS WILL BE ONE OF SUBJECTS SAUVAGNARGUES IS TO DISCUSS.

4. FRENCH BILATERAL AID: MARTINS ALSO THOUGHT FRENCH WERE BECOMING SOMEWHAT MORE ACCOMMODATING ON BILATERAL ECONOMIC SIDE, ALTHOUGH SO FAR PRIMARILY IN THE PRIVATE INVESTMENT SECTOR. SPECIFICALLY (AS LISBON IS PERHAPS AWARE) FRENCH HAVE GIVEN GREEN LIGHT "IN PRINCIPLE" TO 500 MILLION FRANC PRIVATE INVESTMENTS IN PETRO CHEMICAL CRACKING PLANT PROJECT, WHICH WILL BE IMPORTANT SOURCE NEW EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION. AMBASSADOR MARTINS SAID HE HAD HOPED TO INTEREST THE FRENCH IN THE FULL AMOUNT OF ABOUT 1 BILLION FRANCS. (DETAILS WILL PRESUMABLY BE WORKED OUT DURING MINISTERIAL VISITS.) MARTINS HAS (OR WILL NOW ATTEMPT) INTEREST FRG INVESTMENT IN REMAINING 50 PER CENT THIS PROJECT. HE ALSO HOPED PLANNED VISITS WILL PRODUCE EXPANDED OFFICIAL BILATERAL AID EFFORT. (COMMENT: REPORT OF FRENCH GREEN LIGHT "IN PRINCIPLE" TO PAY HALF OF COST OF CRACKING PLANT TRACKS WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMENTS FROMENT-MEURICE MADE TO MINECON, REFTEL A. LISBON COMMENTS WOULD BE HELPFUL.)

5. PORTUGUESE MEMBERSHIP IN EUROPEAN COMMUNITY: MARTINS SAID ASPECT OF FRENCH POLICY WHICH BOTHERED HIM MOST WAS HIS "FEELING" THAT DESPITE PROGRESS BEING MADE IN LISBON, GOF WILL CONTINUE TO BE MORE INCLINED TO PUSH SPANISH RATHER THAN PORTUGUESE MEMBERSHIP IN

THE EC AND SO IN EUROPE. PORTUGAL HAS ALWAYS BEEN MORE
OUT THAN IN. IN THE PAST THAT WAS PERHAPS MORE
JUSTIFIED. AT THIS POINT, IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF
IT WERE LEFT DANGLING ON THE FRINGE OF EUROPE, FOR
TRADITIONAL ATMOSPHERIC RATHER THAN CURRENT POLITICAL
REASONS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 01968

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6. POLITICAL COMMENTS: MARTINS ADDED LITTLE TO
CURRENT APPRECIATION PORTUGUESE SITUATION EXCEPT THAT
HE EXPECTS CUNHAL TO BE REPLACED SOON. USSR GAMBLER
AND LOST IN CP POWERPLAY ON NOVEMBER 25. ALTHOUGH
CUNHAL IS THOROUGHLY DISCIPLINED APARACHNIK, IT WILL
PROBABLY STILL BE IN COMMUNIST INTEREST TO PRODUCE A
NEW, LESS USED-UP FACE. HE DECLINED TO SPECULATE ABOUT

SPECIFIC NAMES.

7. APART FROM ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, NEXT MAJOR POLITICAL TEST WILL COME IN PORTUGUESE ELECTIONS. MARTINS SPECULATED THAT SOCIALISTS WOULD MORE THAN HOLD THEIR OWN. HOWEVER, PPD IS LIKELY TO MAKE GAINS BEYOND THEIR PRESENT SHARE IN GOVERNMENT. THIS MAY RAISE SPECTER OF "RESURGENCE OF THE RIGHT" IN SOME EYES AND COULD
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REQUIRE SOME REJUGGLING. HOWEVER, MARTINS WAS CLEARLY CONFIDENT THAT ELECTION WOULD, ON WHOLE, CONVINCINGLY CONFIRM WORK OF SOARES, SOCIALIST PARTY AND AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT.

8. ON OTHER FRONTS, MARTINS CONFIRMED THE RECENTLY REPORTED IMPROVEMENT IN PORTUGUESE-SPANISH RELATIONS, BUT EXPRESSED RESERVE ABOUT THE POLITICAL PROSPECTS IN SPAIN ITSELF. JUAN CARLOS MAY NOT BE MOVING FAST ENOUGH TO HEAD OFF POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS ACTION-RE-ACTION CYCLE NOW DEVELOPING, PARTICULARLY SINCE FORCE IS BEGINNING TO BE USED. IN FACE THIS SITUATION THE PLANS OF OTHER SOCIALIST PARTIES WITH RESPECT TO SPAIN MAY WELL BE OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS. MARTINS VOLUNTEERED, IN THIS CONTEXT THAT MITTERAND DID NOT ACCOMPANY FRENCH STUDY MISSION TO PORTUGAL FOR REASON CITED PARA 3 REFTEL (D), I.E., THAT PS NOT ABLE RESOLVE DILEMMA POSED BY POSSIBILITY THAT SPANISH SOCIALISTS MIGHT JOIN IN COALITION WHILE COMMUNISTS REMAINED BANNED.

9. SPINOLA: MARTINS APPRECIATED EMBOFF'S ASSURANCES, TRANSMITTED ON BEHALF OF EMBASSY, THAT NEITHER BURGSTALLER OR ANY ONE ELSE IN PARIS HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH SPINOLA, AS CLAIMED NOUVELLE OBSERVATEUR. (PARIS 1628). MARTINS SAID SPINOLA WAS BEING FINANCED NOW BY "VERY CONSERVATIVE" PORTUGUESE AND HAD DISCREDITED HIMSELF IN SPAIN. HE CLAIMED NOT TO KNOW HIS WHEREABOUTS AT PRESENT.

10. COMMENT: AMBASSADOR MARTINS IS A LONG-TIME CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND OF SOARES AND HAS EXCELLENT CONTACTS IN FRENCH SOCIALIST CIRCLES. IN OUR CONTACTS WE HAVE FOUND HIM ASTUTE, OBJECTIVE AND WELL-INFORMED. HE IS ANXIOUS TO CONTINUE A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH US IN PARIS.
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